

"S" MATTER, POP?"



THE DESTROYING ANGEL

By Louis Joseph Vance

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CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

RAGGING a pillow beneath it, he

let her down again.

"Good," he said in accents

meant to be enheartening;

"you'll be all right in a moment or

two."

Her colorless lips moved in a whisper

he had to bend close to distinguish.

"Please—"

"Yes!"

"Please don't call anybody in—"

"I won't. Don't worry."

The lids quivered down over her eyes

and her mouth was wrung with an-

guish.

He started, perplexed.

He wanted to go away quickly, but

he couldn't get his assent to do

so just yet.

She was in no condition to be left

alone, this delicate and fragile child,

defenseless and bent.

It seemed easy to conjecture the hell

of suffering she must have passed

through before coming to a state of

such desperation.

There were dull blue shadows beneath

eyes red with weeping, a foreboding

to her thin, bloodless lips, a pinched

look of wretchedness like a glass over

her unhappy face, that told too plain

a story.

A strange girl to find in a plight like

her, he thought, not pretty, but quite

unusual, delicate, sensitive, high-strung,

bred to the finer things of life.

This last was self-evident in the fine

simplicity of her severe plain dress.

Over her hair, drawn tight down round

her head, she wore one of those knitted

motor caps which were the fashion of

the day.

Her shoes were still wet and a trifle

muddy, her coat and skirt a trifle more

than damp, indicating that she had re-

turned from a dash to the drug store

not long before Whitaker had arrived.

A variety of impressions, these with

others less significant, crowded upon

his perceptions in little more than a

glance.

For suddenly nature took her in hand;

she twisted upon her side, as if to es-

cape his regard, and covered her face

her palms muffling deep, tearing sobs,

while waves of pent-up misery racked

her slender little body.

Whitaker moved softly away.

Difficult he found it to guess what to

do, more difficult still to do nothing.

His nerves were badly jangled; light-

footed, he wandered restlessly to and

fro, half distracted between the storm

of weeping that beat gustily within the

room and the deadly, blind drum of the

downpour upon the tin roof beyond the

windows.

Since that twilight hour in that tawdry

hotel chamber no one had ever been

able to counterbalance his remorse

to Whitaker. He listened then to the

very voice of utter woe.

Once, pausing at a center-table, he

happened to look down.

He saw a little heap of the hotel writ-

ing paper, topped with envelopes, a

pen, a bottle of ink.

Three of the envelopes were sealed

and superscribed, and two were stamped

with the unobtrusive letter "H," ad-

dressed to the proprietor of the Commercial

House. Whitaker nodded at this as if

to an acquaintance, he had expected

something of the sort.

Of the others, one was directed to a

Mr. C. W. Morton, in care of another

person, at a number on lower Sixth

avenue, New York; and from this

Whitaker began to understand the

singular manner of his introduction to

the wrong room. There's no great dis-

tinction between Morton and Morten,

especially if written carelessly.

But the third letter caused his eyes

to widen considerably. It bore the

name of Thurlia Ladislaws, Esq., and a

Wall street office address.

Whitaker's mouth shaped a still-born

whistle.

He was recalling with surprising dis-

tinctness the fragment of dialogue he

had absorbed with inattentive ears, the

previous afternoon, when he waited for

the elevator just outside the grillroom

of his club.

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Whitaker.

H E lived through a long, bad quar-

ter-hour, his own tense nerves

twining in sympathy with the

girl's sobbing—like telegraph

wires singing in a gale—before he ven-

tured again to approach her.

In the interval his mind was busy

with many thoughts—thoughts strangely

raw and compelling, wearing a fresh

complexion that lacked altogether the

coloring of self-interest.

He mixed a weak draft of brandy and

water, and returned to the bedside.

The storm was passing in convulsive

gasp, even more widely spaced, but still

the girl lay with her back to him, as if

"If you'll sit up and try to drink this,"

he suggested quietly, "I think you'll

feel a good deal better."

Her shoulders moved spasmodically;

otherwise he saw no sign that she

heard.

"Come—please," he begged gently.

She made an effort to rise, sat up on

the bed, dabbed at her eyes with a sod-

dened wisp of handkerchief, and groped

blindly for the glass.

He offered it to her lips.

"What is it?" she whispered hoarsely.

He spoke of the mixture in disparag-

ing terms as to its potency, until at

length she consented to swallow it, al-

though she muttered on the rim of the tum-

bler.

The effect was quickly apparent in the

color that came into her cheeks, faint

but warm.

He avoided looking directly at her,

however, and cast around for the bell

pull, which he presently found on the

wall near the head of the bed.

She moved quickly with alarm.

"What are you going to do?" she de-

manded in a stronger voice.

"Order you something to eat," he

said, "No—please don't object. You

need food, and I mean to see you get it

before I leave you."

If she thought of protesting, the meas-

ured determination in his manner de-

terred her.

After a moment she asked:

"Please—who are you?"

"My name is Whitaker," he said—

"Hugh Morton Whitaker."

She repeated the name aloud.

"Haven't I heard of you? Aren't you

engaged to Alice Cartwright?"

"I'm the man you mean," he said

quietly, "but I'm not engaged to Alice

Cartwright."

"Oh!" Perplexity clouded the eyes

that followed closely his every move-

ment. "How did you happen to find me

here?"

"Quite by accident," he replied, "I

didn't want to be known, no register

as Hugh Morton. They mistook me for

your husband. Do you mind telling me

how long it is since you've had any-

thing to do?"

She told him: "Last night."

He suffered a sense of shame only

second to her own to see the dull flush

that accompanied her reply.

His fingers itched for the throat of

C. W. Morton, chauffeur. Happily, a

knock at the door distracted him.

Opening it no wider than necessary to

communicate with the bell-boy, he gave

him an order for the kitchen, together

with an incentive to speed the service.

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others less significant, crowded upon

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previous afternoon, when he waited for

the elevator just outside the grillroom

of his club.

"I think you are rather fortunate," he

said slowly.

"Fortunate?"

He smiled a little with the chill bit-

terness of her cry.

"You've had a narrow but a wonder-

ful lucky escape."

"Oh! But I'm not glad. I was des-

perate."

"I mean," he interrupted coolly, "from

Mr. Morton. The silver lining is, you're

not married to a blackguard."

"Oh, yes, yes," she agreed passion-

ately.

"And you have youth, health, years of

life before you."

He smiled audaciously.

"You wouldn't say that if you under-

stood."

"There are worse things to put up

with than youth and health and the

right to live."

"But—how can I live? What am I to

do?"

"Have you thought of going home?"

"It isn't possible."

"Have you made sure of that? Have

you written to your father—explained?"

"I sent him a special delivery three

days ago, and—yesterday a tele-

gram. I knew it wouldn't do any good,

but I—I told him everything. He didn't

answer. He won't ever."

A Continuation of This Story Will

Be Found in Tomorrow's

Issue of The Times.

DR. JAMES A. WATSON

FIFTY-SEVEN TODAY

Member of Medical and Civic

Bodies Was Graduated From

Georgetown University.

Dr. James A. Watson, Anacostia

physician, and member of medical and

civic bodies of the District, is cele-

brating his fifty-seventh birthday to-

day. Dr. Watson is a native of Staf-

ford county, Va., and came to the Dis-

trict in 1878.

He became connected with the Gov-

ernment Hospital for the Insane,

passed through all the positions there

as nurse, chief supervisor, clerk and

pharmacist, and studied medicine at

night. He graduated from the Na-

tional College of Pharmacy, of Wash-

ington, in 1883, and occupied the chair

of analytical chemistry later.

He graduated from the Georgetown

Medical School in 1890, since which

time he has been practicing medicine

continuously. He held two commis-

sions under Grover Cleveland, one as

lieutenant in the Anacostia Rifles, the

other as a surgeon in the Ambulance

Corps.

He has been one of the vice presi-

dents of the Medical Society of the